

The Ethical State by John David Garcia REVIEW

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Everybody, and welcome to this deep dive. It's, it's gonna be a fascinating one today, I think. We're diving into the ethical state by John David Garcia. And, you know, this is a book that you specifically wanted to explore. So, yeah.

Political ethics, maximizing creativity, even a little bit of quantum mechanics. It's gonna be a wild ride. It certainly seems that way. Yeah. Garcia's work always promises an interesting journey.

For sure. Yeah. And, you know, right from the preface, you get this feeling that he's been on this quest. Like, it's been decades of him trying to figure out what actually is an ethical society, and how can we build one that truly unleashes human potential. And he even mentioned some sacrifices he made to even write the book.

You know? Mhmm. Like, this is a true labor of love for him. But one thing that really jumped out was this bold claim. He says he's found the key to maximizing creativity within a society.

That's where things get really interesting because Garcia doesn't see maximizing creativity like just producing more artists and musicians necessarily. Although, he doesn't have anything against artists and musicians. Of course, stop. But he sees creativity as this engine of progress. It's how we solve problems, how we innovate, and how we kind of push the boundaries of what we understand as humans, and so he actually defines an ethical state as a state that is dedicated to maximizing everyone's creativity without limiting anyone else's in the process.

Okay. So no pressure, governments of the world. That's a tall order. How do you even begin to measure something like creativity on a societal scale? Well, that's one of the big questions that Garcia is wrestling with in this book, and to even begin to answer that, he connects creativity to truth and intelligence.

He argues that these things are all intertwined. It's like this feedback loop. Yeah. And he even introduces this concept of what he calls negative creativity, which sounds kinda strange at first. You know, how can creativity be negative?

But think of it as using your intelligence not to build something up, but rather to tear something down or to stifle someone else's creative spark. Oh, wow. And Garcia argues that a lot of our systems today, especially in traditional education, actually encourage this negative creativity. Fascinating. So instead of, like, nurturing those moments, it's more like stop doing that.

Color inside the lines. Yeah. It rewards conformity and punishes those who think differently. Wow. You know, thinking back to some of my own educational experience, so Garcia is advocating for, like, a total overhaul of education then.

He is he wants to see a system that is rooted in cooperation and not this cutthroat competition that we see now, where kids are encouraged to see now where kids are encouraged to generalize their learning, to connect those dots themselves, and to really embrace those unique creative impulses. And he even goes so far as to say that too much state involvement can actually be detrimental to education. So he's not saying let's just get rid of all the rules, but it's more like let's not crush the human spirit while we're trying to teach people things. Exactly. Okay.

Well, this is interesting because he takes kind of an unexpected turn here. He dives headfirst into religion, specifically, Judeo Christian ethics. Right. And this is where his background in evolutionary ethics really comes into play. He sees these connections between his ideal ethical state and certain interpretations of religious texts.

For example, he draws a parallel between the Jewish tradition of mikvah, the ritual bath after menstruation, and the importance of respecting natural rhythms within a marriage. So he's not necessarily advocating for a theocracy here, but he's finding some themes within religious traditions that kind of connect to this idea of ethical behavior. Exactly. Right. He even links the commandment against taking the lord's name in vain to the importance of scientific honesty.

Wow. He's finding these ethical threads everywhere. He's weaving them together into this tapestry. Okay. But then it gets even wilder because he goes on to connect his ethical framework to quantum mechanics.

Quantum mechanics. Okay. Now I'm gonna ethical framework to quantum mechanics. Quantum mechanics. Okay.

Now my brain is really doing back flips. How do you even begin to bridge that gap? Well, you know, Garcia was a big picture thinker, and he talks about this mystical paradigm and how some of the greatest scientific minds, foes like Einstein Niels Bohr, all of them had this deep respect for the mysteries of the universe that went beyond just pure logic and equations. Okay. And so he uses this term infinite holographic process to describe his model of the universe.

It suggests that everything is interconnected. But, Hillan, infinite holographic process. Can you unpack that a little bit for me? It sounds like something out of Star Trek. Right?

A little bit. Yeah. So imagine a hologram where every piece contains the image of the whole. Okay. That's kind of how Garcia sees the universe.

Each part reflects the totality of existence. Woah. It's a mind bending concept, but it ties into his idea that we're all connected and our actions all have these ripple effects throughout this whole system. So from classrooms to the cosmos, this is a real deep dive. And we're going even deeper because we haven't even gotten to his most radical proposal yet, the octet system.

Right. Right. This is a world governed not by majority rule, but by these small self governing groups of 8 people where every decision they make requires unanimous consent. You had me at unanimous consent. Yeah.

I am very intrigued, listeners. Stick around because we are gonna be right back after this quick break. Unanimous consent. That sounds both fascinating and slightly terrifying all at the same time. It's definitely a radical departure from the way we typically think about democracy.

So how does Garcia justify throwing out our current systems of governance? It just seems like it would be a recipe for gridlock. Well, he actually agrees with you on that gridlock point. He's incredibly skeptical of majority rule. He argues that it often leads to what he calls a tyranny of the majority.

Basically, the least creative voices end up having the most power, and they can drown out everybody else. And he uses historical examples to back this up, things like slavery and segregation in the United States, even the internment of Japanese Americans during World War 2. Yeah. You can't really argue with those examples. I mean, those are definitely times when the majority was not on the right side of history.

Exactly. And so Garcia sees the octet system with its emphasis on unanimous consent as a way to safeguard against those really dangerous impulses. Okay. I see the theory behind it. But practically speaking, how would this even work?

I mean, do you elect representatives to these octets? Is there, like, a president in this system? So he envisions this kind of multi tiered system where these octets would start at a local level, and then they elect representatives to higher levels of government. Okay. So it's like this pyramid of consensus where each level builds on the one below it.

And, yes, there is a president in Garcia's ethical state, but get this, they're not directly elected by a popular vote. Wait. So no campaigning? No rallies? No, I approve this message?

Not quite. It all goes back to those hierarchical octets that we talked about. Oh. Each level selects a male female pair to represent them at that next higher level. Okay.

And, eventually, you reach the top tier. Those representatives are the ones who choose the president. So in a way, it's kinda like the electoral college, but on a much larger and more complex scale. Exactly. And Garcia argues that this system ensures that the president truly has the support of the entire citizenry and not just, you know, 51% who happen to vote for them on any given day.

That's a really different way of thinking about leadership. It's almost like choosing a leader based on consensus and widespread respect rather than just popularity. Right. And he acknowledges that this would be incredibly challenging to actually implement. Yeah.

No kidding. You'd need a society that was already pretty unified in its values and goals to even get to that point. Definitely. But Garcia is very specific when it comes to the structure of this ethical state. He lays out everything from how taxes would be collected to how the government would function during a state of emergency.

Okay. Well, let's talk about taxes because that's always a fun topic. Yeah. How does Garcia's ethical state handle everybody's favorite thing? This might be a little surprising, but Garcia actually considers traditional taxation, station, you know, where the government basically takes a cut of your income without your explicit consent to be a form of theft.

Wow. He didn't mince words there. No. He did not. He argues that it's unethical for the government to just take the fruits of your labor without asking nicely first.

So is he advocating for, like, a completely tax free society then? Well, not exactly. He proposes a limited and voluntary system, so taxes would only be levied for what he considers the most essential services, things like defending citizens' rights, protecting life and property, and maintaining a stable monetary system. Okay. So the bare minimum, basically.

What what happens if you just decide, you know what, I don't really feel like paying taxes this year? Well, there's a trade off. Off. If you choose not to pay you, forfeit your citizenship and any of the benefits that come with it. So no free rides, basically.

Exactly. It's like you're voluntarily choosing to be a part of this society and to contribute to its upkeep. Interesting. So he applies the same logic to other areas like health care and education, I'm guessing. You know it.

Garcia was all about limited government. He believed that these services were ultimately best left to the private sector or to voluntary associations of citizens. So less bureaucracy, more individual initiative. That definitely sounds like it would appeal to some people. But does he address the potential downsides of that approach?

Like, what about inequality or exploitation? Those seem like pretty big concerns. He does acknowledge those concerns. He argues that a truly ethical society would have mechanisms in place to prevent things from going off the rails. He envisions a system where individuals are empowered to hold each other accountable, where transparency and consensus building are the safeguards against abusive power.

So it all comes back to this idea of individual responsibility and collective action working together. Exactly. It's a very Utopian vision. Like, he's trying to create a system that is as close to perfect as possible while still acknowledging that human beings are inherently imperfect. And that's one of the things that makes Garcia's work so fascinating.

He doesn't shy away from the challenges of creating a truly ethical society. He embraces them head on. Well, listeners, we've covered a lot of ground here, but we're not done yet. We've talked about octets, tackled taxes, and explored this idea of voluntary taxation, which is a new one for me. But up next, we're gonna dive into something even more thought provoking.

Garcia's views on law and order, specifically, his unique approach to criminal justice. Stay tuned. Okay. So we're back and ready to dive into the world of crime and punishment in Garcia's ethical state, which knowing him is probably not gonna be your typical walk them up and throw away the key approach. You would be correct.

Garcia's views on criminal justice are probably the most radical departure from the way we currently do things. Okay. I am officially intrigued. So lay it on me. What does he propose?

Trial by octet? Public shaming? Think even more outside the box than that Garcia believes the only truly ethical form of punishment in an ethical state is exile. Exile, like banishment, as in go forth and sin no more, but somewhere else. That's the one.

He sees traditional punishments like imprisonment finds anything that restricts individual liberty as inherently unethical. He argues that exile, preferably to some remote island, is the only way to both protect society and avoid cruel and unusual punishment. Wow. Okay. Talk about a 3 strikes policy.

Yeah. But I'm already thinking about the practicalities here. What about rehabilitation? What about the victims and them getting some kind of closure? He does address those points.

He believes that true rehabilitation has to come from within. It can't be forced. And as for the victims, he proposes a system of restitution where criminals are obligated to compensate those they've harmed. So the focus shifts from punishment to making amends and restoring balance. It's a really different way of approaching justice.

That's for sure. But, again, it seems incredibly difficult to pull off. Absolutely. But remember, Garcia is a details guy. He doesn't just throw out these big ideas.

He gets into the nitty gritty of how this stuff would actually work in his ethical state. So he's got it all figured out, From collecting voluntary taxes to airlifting criminals to deserted islands. He's definitely given it a lot of thought. And speaking of things that

require a lot of thought, how does this ethical state handle emergencies? You know those situations where you need the government to act quickly and decisively even if it means maybe bending the rules a little bit.

Yeah. Because individual liberty is great and all the but not if a hurricane is about to wipe your octet off the map. Exactly. So Garcia tries to strike that balance between swift action and preventing abuse of power. He says the president can declare a state of emergency, but only for a maximum of 7 days.

Anything beyond that requires unanimous consent from that executive octet we talked about. So even in a crisis, there are checks and balances to prevent the government from seizing too much power. It's like he anticipated every possible scenario where things could go wrong. He was definitely aware of the potential for even the most well intentioned systems to be corrupted. And that's a big part of what makes his work so thought provoking.

It's not just about creating some perfect utopia. It's about grappling with the messy realities of human nature and trying to design a society that allows for both individual freedom and collective well-being. Which as we've discovered is a pretty tall order. But even if we don't all agree with his methods, I think Garcia's ideas force us to confront some really important questions about how we wanna live together and how we can create a future that is both ethical and creatively fulfilling. I think that's a great note to end on.

It's not about agreeing with every single one of his ideas, but it's about engaging with them and having these conversations about what really matters. And who knows? Maybe somewhere down the line, some of these radical ideas won't seem so radical after all. Listeners, thank you for joining us on this deep dive into the mind of John David Garcia. Hopefully, you've learned something new or at least had your perspective challenged a little bit.

Remember, keep those conversations going. Keep thinking critically, and most importantly, keep exploring the world with an open mind.

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Summary